

DONALD W. RIEGLE, JR.  
MICHIGAN

COMMITTEES:  
BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS: Chairman

FINANCE:  
Subcommittee on  
Health for Families  
and the Uninsured:  
Chairman

BUDGET  
AGING

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2201  
(202) 224-4822

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August 10, 1994

42-265  
MICHIGAN REGIONAL OFFICES

CENTRAL  
800 Washington Square Bldg  
109 W. Michigan Ave  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 377-1713

WAYNE-MONROE  
1155 Brewery Park Blvd.  
Suite 343  
Detroit, MI 48207  
(313) 226-3188

EASTERN  
Suite 910  
352 S. Saginaw St.  
Flint, MI 48502  
(313) 766-5115

SOUTHEASTERN  
Century Center Bldg., 3d Floor  
30800 Van Dyke  
Warren, MI 48093  
(313) 573-9017

UPPER PENINSULA  
Room 323, P.O. Bldg.  
200 W. Washington  
Marquette, MI 49855  
(906) 228-7457

WESTERN  
Suite 716 Federal Bldg.  
110 Michigan Ave., N.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
(616) 456-2592

Telecommunications  
Device for the Deaf  
(517) 377-1899

NORTHERN-LOWER  
309 Front Street  
Traverse City, MI 49685  
(616) 946-1300

Ms. Linda T. Solheim  
Director, Office of Legislative  
Affairs  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

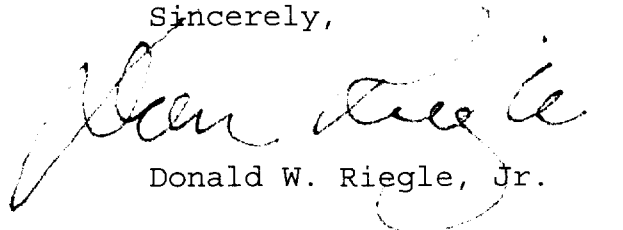
Dear Ms. Solheim:

Enclosed is a letter from Mr. Alberto Sitchon.

Would you please give this matter your consideration, and provide my regional office listed below with your findings.

Thank you for your prompt assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Donald W. Riegle, Jr.

DWR/sbs

Enclosure

CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE  
800 Washington Square Bldg.  
109 West Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933  
(517) 377-1713

No. of Copies rec'd 2  
List A B C D E

ALBERTO L. SITCHON  
2816 Homewood Drive  
Troy, Michigan 48098

July 14, 1994

Federal Communications Commission  
Cable Services Bureau  
Customer Protection Division  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington DC 20554

Re: T.C.I. Cablevision of Oakland County  
4500 Delemere, Royal Oak, MI 48073  
(FCC COMMUNITY UNIT: MI0836)

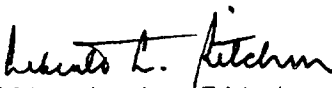
Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to call your attention to what I consider an unconscionable attempt by T.C.I. Cablevision of Oakland County to circumvent your rules and the will of Congress to control an industry that continues to flaunt its monopolistic grip on us hapless consumers.

I have attached a composite photocopy showing my June and July 1994 cable bills from T.C.I. and direct your attention to the charge for the converter box. The charge increased a whopping 149% from \$2.08 to \$5.18 a month!!!! On top of this, it is the same box that I have already been paying for over several years and T.C.I. had probably already recoup the cost of those boxes many times over. Now, tell me if you have succeeded in controlling these crocodiles (pardon my analogy).

Therefore I urge you to please investigate this and give us helpless citizens some real relief. Please!!

Sincerely,

  
Alberto L. Sitchon

cc: U.S. Senator Carl Levin  
U.S. Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr.  
U.S. Congressman Bob Carr  
U.S. Congressman Sander Levin

FOR- 2816 HOMEWOOD DR

5/15	PREVIOUS BALANCE	51.15
5/18	PAYMENT RECEIVED	51.15-
6/16- 7/15	BASIC SERVICE	10.29
6/16- 7/15	CABLE PLUS	13.03
6/16- 7/15	PREMIUM PACKAGE	23.32
	WHICH INCLUDES:	
	HBO	
	SHOWTIME	
	AND CINEMAX	
6/16- 7/15	CONVERTER	2.08
6/16- 7/15	FRANCHISE FEE	2.43
6/15	BALANCE DUE	51.15

JUN 16 THRU JUL 15, 1994

Check # 5883  
6/13/94

FOR- 2816 HOMEWOOD DR

6/15	PREVIOUS BALANCE	51.15
6/17	PAYMENT RECEIVED	51.15-
7/16- 8/15	BASIC SERVICE	9.41
7/16- 8/15	CABLE PLUS	12.23
7/16- 8/15	PREMIUM PACKAGE	23.32
	WHICH INCLUDES:	
	HBO	
	SHOWTIME	
	AND CINEMAX	
7/16- 8/15	CONVERTER	5.18
7/16- 8/15	FRANCHISE FEE	2.51
7/15	BALANCE DUE	52.65

JUL 16 THRU AUG 15, 1994

Check # 5902  
7/15/94

\*OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS ARE\*  
549-2100 (SOUTH) 334-1144 (NORTH)  
T.D.D. PHONE # 549-5609  
4500 DELEMERE, ROYAL OAK LOBBY HOURS  
M-F 9:00AM-8:00PM SAT 9:00AM-5:00PM  
  
PLEASE SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:  
T.C.I. CABLEVISION OF OAKLAND COUNTY  
4500 DELEMERE, ROYAL OAK, MI 48073

YOUR FRANCHISE AUTHORITY'S NAME AND  
ADDRESS IS:  
CITY OF TROY  
500 W. BIG BEAVER  
TROY, MI 48084

YOUR FCC COMMUNITY UNIT IS: MI0836

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
CABLE SERVICES BUREAU  
CUSTOMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
1919 M STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20554  
(202) 416-0856

WE WILL HAVE SEVERAL  
PREMIUM CHANNELS WITH FREE PREVIEWS.  
THESE PREMIUM CHANNEL PREVIEWS MAY  
CONTAIN MOVIES RATED (R) OR (NC-17).  
YOU MAY CHOOSE TO BLOCK OUT THE  
PREMIUM CHANNEL PREVIEW WITH THE  
PARENTAL CONTROL OPTION ON YOUR  
CONVERTER. PLEASE TUNE TO CHANNEL 80  
FOR INSTRUCTIONS, OR CONTACT A  
CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE FOR  
ASSISTANCE.

WHEN CALLING FOR INFORMATION PLEASE HAVE YOUR ACCOUNT # 08700502 READY. IF  
REFERRING TO YOUR STATEMENT, YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER WILL FOLLOW 02544.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

OCT 24 1994

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
CN-9404169

The Honorable Donald Riegle Jr.  
Central Regional Office  
800 Washington Bldg.  
109 West Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Senator Riegle:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Alberto L. Sitchon, of Troy, Michigan. Mr. Sitchon is concerned because TCI has increased his converter box rates from \$2.08 to \$5.18 a month. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Under the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, the Federal Communications Commission, along with state and local franchising authorities, enforce the cable regulations that affect the basic service tier and cable programming services tier. The local franchising authority is responsible for regulating rates for basic cable service, equipment used to receive basic cable service, and installation and service charges related to basic service. The basic service tier generally includes over-the-air television broadcast stations and public, educational and governmental access channels.

The Commission is responsible for regulating the rates charged for cable programming services. Cable programming services include all video programming provided by a cable company except: (1) programming provided on the basic service tier; and (2) programming provided on a per-channel or per-program basis. Video programming provided on a per-channel or per-program basis (for example, a premium movie channel such as HBO or a pay-per-view sports event) is not subject to rate regulation either by the Commission or a franchising authority.

Regarding the charge for the converter box, under the 1992 Cable Act the cable operator may charge a rental fee for equipment such as a converter box. The fee must be based on actual cost, which includes a reasonable profit. Since Mr. Sitchon believes that the fee charged for the converter box is not based on actual cost, he should file a formal complaint. To file a complaint regarding the price of basic cable service, equipment used to receive basic service, and installation and service charges related to basic service, Mr. Sitchon must contact his local franchising authority, which according to his cable bill, would be the City of Troy.


Mr. Sitchon should also be aware that he may file a complaint regarding charges on tiers other than basic. In order to file a complaint about the charges on tiers other than basic, Mr. Sitchon must complete FCC Form 329 and mail it to the Commission. A copy of that form is enclosed. Complaints filed with the Commission must be made within 45 days after the customer first receives a bill reflecting a change in cable programming service rates or in the number of channels offered on a tier other than the basic tier.

The Honorable Donald W. Riegle

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I trust that this response will prove both informative and helpful.

Sincerely,

  
Meredith J. Jones  
Chief, Cable Services Bureau

Enclosure